



# MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE  
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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CONTACT: ANDREA WHITE 615.253.5641  
OR 615.512.7007

## COVERKIDS PLAN SUBMITTED TO FEDERAL OFFICIALS GOVERNOR'S PLAN FOR COMPREHENSIVE INSURANCE FOR CHILDREN SENT TO CMS FOR APPROVAL

**NASHVILLE, Tenn.** - The formal application for CoverKids, Governor Bredesen's plan to extend comprehensive health insurance to uninsured children, has been submitted to the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for approval. Once approved by CMS, Tennessee will be eligible to receive a \$3 federal match for every \$1 the state spends on health coverage for uninsured children. Tennessee has allocated \$63 million over 3 years to fund this program.

"CoverKids will fill a critical gap for uninsured children in Tennessee," said Governor Phil Bredesen. "Investing in the health of our children at an early age is one of the best investments we can make in our state's future. CoverKids will offer comprehensive coverage for our kids, which promises to keep them healthier for a lifetime."

CoverKids is one component within the suite of Cover Tennessee programs designed to offer affordable health insurance options for uninsured Tennesseans. Children under 19 years of age who are in families with incomes under 250% of the federal poverty level (about \$50,000 for a family of four) will be eligible to receive coverage under CoverKids. Additionally, pregnant women who otherwise meet eligibility requirements will be able to receive maternity coverage under CoverKids.

The benefits covered by CoverKids are based on the coverage provided to state employees. Unlike the state employee health plan, CoverKids will include preventive care, such as well-baby and well-child exams and age appropriate immunizations, with no co-payments.

"The Census Bureau estimates there are more than 127,000 children in Tennessee going without insurance," said Dave Goetz, Commissioner of Finance & Administration, who is leading the Cover Tennessee initiative. "We are deliberately sticking very close to the standards and benchmarks of the federal State Children's Health Insurance Program, or SCHIP model, so CMS can approve this plan quickly, and we can get this up and running where it can help the kids who need it."

"We are right on schedule," said Dr. Andrea Willis, Director of CoverKids. "Our timeline for implementation is aggressive, but we are well on our way to bringing CoverKids to life. It is important that we get this plan operational as soon as possible. For many of these kids CoverKids may represent their first opportunity to develop a relationship with a primary care provider and get regular care."

Enrollment is expected to open in late October with benefits to begin in January, 2007.

More information on all Cover Tennessee programs is available at [www.CoverTN.gov](http://www.CoverTN.gov). Tennesseans can sign up to receive email updates as more information becomes available on the web site or by calling 1-866-COVERTN.

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STATE CAPITOL, 1ST FLOOR  
NASHVILLE, TN 37243  
615.741.2401